

## DEVELOPMENT OF A PSYCHOMETRIC INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE WORK LIFE BALANCE

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### ABSTRACT

Contribution of the service sector to the national economy of India has been considered as an important factor in the determination of the national GDP and over the last few decades the issue of work-life balance (WLB) especially among the service sector employees has been receiving increased attention. Even though some scales are available for the measurement of WLB, they do not exactly fit into the societal and familial concepts existing in the Indian society. Therefore in the present work, a 42 items four factor instrument is developed for measuring the WLB of employees working in the service sector. The data needed for the development of the scale was collected from 375 employees working in the various categories of service sector. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin test and Bartlett's test were conducted to check the sampling adequacy and sphericity of the data and the dimensions (factors) were resolved through factor analysis. The WLB measurement scale was found to be having high reliability and validity with dependable Cronbach alpha values. Attempts have also been made to discuss the implications of measuring the WLB of the employees in human resource management.

**KEYWORDS:** Work life balance, WLB scale, Psychometric instrument, Service sector employees

### INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario of globalization and economic liberalization accompanied by recession and layoff, two cardinal domains in the lives of an employee is work and personal/family life. Moreover, the present day society throughout the world has witnessed dramatic changes in the concepts about work and family life over the past few decades due to the technological advancements and improvements in living conditions. These changes and advancements quite often lead to interference, conflict and competing demands between the expectations of the work place and personal needs at home (Lambert *et al.*, 2006). As a result, the subject of work life balance (WLB) has received wide spread publicity and has been subjected to an increasing number of investigations in different parts of the globe (Clark, 2000; Fisher, 2001; Greenhaus *et al.*, 2003; Mathew and Panchanatham, 2009; 2010). Various workers have defined WLB in different terms. Kofodimos (1993) considered WLB as "finding the allocation of time and energy that fits your values, making conscious choices about how to structure your life and integrating inner needs and outer demands and involves honoring and living by your deepest personal qualities, values and goals". Clark (2000) and Greenblatt (2002) presented comparatively simpler and practical approaches to WLB. While the former defined WLB as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict, the latter proffered WLB as the absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non work demands. Greenhaus *et al.* (2003) have defined WLB as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his/her work and family role. Whatever be the context, balancing work and family domains is increasingly becoming a difficult task for various employees and they are concerned about the boundary between their work and non work lives (Hochschild, 1997; Mathew and Panchanatham, 2009). A critical analysis of the literature reveals a number of consequences and antecedents to WLB issues including health issues (Sparks *et al.*, 1997; Tregaskis *et al.*, 1998), dependent care issues (Zedeck, 1992; Kossek *et al.*, 2001; Hardy and Adnett, 2002) and even positive spillover between the two domains (Pieterse and Mostert, 2005; Rost, 2006).

Due to the increased importance of the topic, various instruments were developed to measure the WLB of different target groups in different contexts. These scales include those developed by Fisher (2001), Greenhaus *et al.* (2003), Hill *et al.* (2004), Huffman *et al.* (2004) and Hayman (2005). Majority of them were developed on the basis of the western societal and work concepts. Most of these instruments are having good validity and reliability in the societal contexts in which they were developed. However, as the etiquettes, customs, values of the society, nature and concepts of the family structure and organization in India are somewhat different from that of the western and European countries; there are some practical difficulties in directly applying these WLB instruments in Indian context. Further, to the best of our knowledge, no precise WLB measurement tool has been developed in the Indian context. Therefore, the present work is an attempt to develop a compact instrument to measure the WLB of employees in the service sector of India, which

contributes a major share to the national GDP (Shah and Agrawal, 2008). Further, based on the data available we propose the following hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: Intrusion of personal life into work (IPLW) and intrusion of work into personal life (IWPL) are negatively related to WLB.

H<sub>2</sub>: Work enhancement by personal life (WEPL) and personal life enhancement by work (PLEW) are positively related to WLB.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Sampling and data collection*

The data needed for developing the WLB scale were collected from a sample population consisting of employees working in the service sector in India (Table 1). The various areas of service sector covered in the present study include education, healthcare, finance and insurance, civil administration, law and order, public transport and tourism and hospitality. A random (probabilistic) sampling method was adopted and a total of 610 employees were invited personally or by e-mail/letter to take part in the survey. Questionnaires were either given directly or sent by post/e-mail to all the 610 employees. Out of 610 questionnaires distributed only 375 duly filled up questionnaires were returned and the response rate was 61.5%. The minimum sample size needed for the study was determined by following Hamburg (1985) and was found to be 229 (N = 375, margin of error = 5%, confidence level = 95%).

### *Development of the measuring instrument (work-life balance scale)*

As a preliminary step, in-depth interviews were conducted among 40 employees belonging to the various areas (already mentioned) of service sector in India. Open ended questions and semi-structured interview formats were used to assess the various dimensions (factors) coming under the WLB of service sector employees. Empirical data generated from these exploratory analyses were coded and mind mapped in an iterative manner until four major dimensions were clustered using dendrogram method. Finally, 46 statements belonging to the four dimensions (factors) and addressing the issues of WLB were developed based on literature review and qualitative research. The content validity ratio of each item (statement) in the scale was calculated following Lawsche (1975) and was found to be more than 0.55. Further, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the instrument as well as to ensure its appropriateness, the statements were subjected to two phases of pilot tests conducted with 20 people each composed of human resources professionals, academic experts and the progressive employees of service sector industry.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

	Category	%
Age	Below 25	22.2
	25 – 35	30.4
	35 – 45	32.3
	Above 45	15.1
Income	Below 10,000	11.1
	10,000 – 20,000	28.1
	20,000 – 30,000	31.5
	Above 30,000	29.3
Education	Below graduation	20.2
	Graduation	25.8
	Post graduation	27.6
	Above post graduation	26.4
Gender	Male	53.6
	Female	46.4
Marital status	Married	69.3
	Single	30.7

Finally, the questionnaire used for this study consisted of two sections. While the former was designate to reveal the socio demographic details of the respondents (Table 1), the latter contained 46 statements (Table 2) designed to measures the WLB of the employees. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach alpha

coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). Scoring was done on a seven point scale 1 = never, 4 = some times, 7 = always). The overall value of the instrument was considered as the WLB index and was taken as the dependent variable for determining the directions and magnitudes of the various dimensions in the WLB scale.

#### Statistical analysis

The 46 items pertaining to WLB of service sector employees (Table 2) were factor analyzed using principal components analysis with varimax rotation method (Table 3), to determine the underlying dimensions (factors) and their appropriateness. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (K.M.O) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity of the instrument were conducted to test the fitness of the data. The relationship between dimensions and WLB was determined by Pearson's correlation analysis (Table 4). The directions and magnitudes of associations between the factors and WLB were tested through regression analysis (Table 5).

#### Findings and discussion

##### Profile of the respondents

All the respondents were service sector employees employed in India. A summary of the socio demographic profile of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

Table 2. Mean ratings of work life balance scale (N = 375)

Item No.	Items	Mean	SD
1.	I cannot concentrate in my work due to the dependent care issues at home	5.44 <sup>a</sup>	0.96
2.	Due to the role overload at home, I am physically tired to discharge my work responsibilities	5.43	0.97
3.	The stress originating from my personal/family life make me unable to concentrate on my work	5.42	1.01
4.	Many a time I have to postpone things at work due to demands on my time at home	5.41	0.98
5.	I could have concentrated more in my work, If I were free from the family burden	5.40	0.99
6.	I find it too tired to perform my works after discharging all my personal/family responsibilities	5.40	0.99
7.	My work suffers as I am mentally worried about my dependents issues at home	5.38	1.02
8.	The needs and demands of my family members interfere with my work related activities	5.39	1.01
9.	I cannot discharge my duties properly at the work place due to my personal/ family problems	5.38	0.99
10.	Due to my pre-occupation with societal activities, I find it difficult to complete work in time	5.38	0.99
11.	Due to increasing work demands, I have to postpone/neglect many of my personal/family needs	5.31	0.99
12.	The stress originating at my work drastically diminishes the happiness of my family	5.28	0.99
13.	As I am busy with my work, I cannot give proper care and attention to my children	5.28	1.00
14.	As I have to spent more time in my work domain I often fail to fulfill my family responsibilities	5.28	0.98
15.	The demands arising from my work make my personal life stressful	5.27	0.98
16.	I face difficulties in personal life due to my profession/work	5.26	0.99
17.	Due to the non-cooperative nature of the co-workers, I face difficulties in personal life	5.26	0.99
18.	The rigid and non supportive nature of my supervisors make my family life a difficult one	5.25	1.00
19.	My spouse feels uncomfortable due to my preoccupation with the work	5.25	1.01
20.	Due to my work lead, I fail to give proper attention to my dependent at home	5.24	1.02
21.	In view of the nature of my work, I find it increasingly difficult to take care of my older parents/in laws	5.23	0.99
22.	I find it difficult to manage my personal and family life and work demands	5.22	0.98

Table 2. Contd...

Item No.	Items	Mean	SD
23.	The tiresome demands of work do not allow me to lead to personal life that I like	5.22	0.99
24.	I come home from work too late to look after the family roles	5.21	1.01
25.	I have health issues arising due to the increasing work demands	5.20	1.01
26.	I do not have proper sleep due to my busy work schedule	5.19	1.03
27.	My work makes me too tired to look after my personal/family obligations	5.18	1.01
28.	Quite often I have to miss out important family/social functions due to my pre-occupation with the work	5.18	1.00
29.	My job keeps my personal/family life enjoyable	1.83	1.00
30.	My work provides me enthusiasm and happiness to pursue my personal/family roles	1.82	0.99
31.	My work contribute to the positive development of my personality	1.81	0.99
32.	My work gives me ample opportunities to get rid of the tensions arising from the personal/family life	1.79	0.99
33.	My exposure and interactions at work help me to provide proper care to my dependents	1.76	1.02
34.	My work schedule helps me to plan and execute my family activities regularly	1.72	1.01
35.	The culture and punctuality at work help me to do my personal/family role properly	1.62	1.01
36.	My family life gives me energy and better mood to perform my duties at work places	1.58	1.04
37.	My family responsibilities and experience make me punctual and responsible at work	1.58	1.04
38.	The experience of managing my family provide me better skill at work	1.57	0.98
39.	Due to the supportive nature of my family members, I am able to relieve tensions originating at work	1.56	1.05
40.	The family life increases my self esteem at work	1.53	0.98
41.	The interaction and concepts prevailing in the family life makes my relationship with my supervisions and coworkers more cordial	1.52	0.99
42.	My personal/family life helps me to be more dedicative and sincere at work	1.52	0.94
43.	My supervisors and co-workers have a difficult time in accommodating my work schedule	1.21	1.00
44.	The experience I gained at work makes me a better parent/spouse	1.18	1.02
45.	My personal/family life has helped to improve my interpersonal skills in the work place	1.17	1.01
46.	My work/profession has no role in miseries I, suffer in my personal life	1.07 <sup>b</sup>	1.01

Note: Seven-point scale was used for rating the WLB instrument ranging from 1 = never, 4 = some times to 7 = always;  
a = the highest mean among all items; b = lowest mean among all items.

#### Mean ratings of the items in the work life balance scale

Among all the items, "I cannot concentrate in my work due to dependent care issues at home" was rated highest with a mean score of 5.44 and the statement "my work/profession has no role in the miseries, I suffer in the personal life" scored the lowest mean of 1.07 (Table 2), which implies that employees have accepted that their work (profession) as well as personal (family) life have played important roles in their WLB. The result of the K.M.O. measure was 0.829 and that of Bartlett's test of sphericity was 2507.01 at 0.000 significance level. These findings suggest the appropriateness of use of the factor analysis. Out of the 46 items (Table 2), three (item nos. 44, 45, 46) were extracted as their factor loadings were less than 0.5 and item no. 43 was deleted to increase the reliability of the construct and to improve the Cronbach alpha score (see foot note of Table 3). Finally the remaining 42 statements constitute the four dimensions of the scale are represented in the descending order of the factor means in Table 3.

Ten statements were loaded in factor 1 (IPLW) with reliability alpha at 0.97 and an overall factor mean of 5.41 (Table 3). This factor was negatively pursued in the WLB scale. Majority of the respondents opined that they were experiencing intrusion of personal life into work very frequently or always. Eighteen statements were loaded into the factor 2 (IWPL). The Cronbach alpha was 0.98 and the factor mean was 3.47 (Table 3). This factor was also negatively pursued and the increased permeability of the work-family boundary was evident from the responses of the respondents. Interference from the work domain in the family life was reported as a common phenomenon by

vast majority of the respondents and thereby causing work-family imbalance. Seven statements were loaded into the factor 3 (WEPL) with an alpha value of 0.81 and a factor mean of 1.76 (Table 3). Work enhancement by personal life is an ideal situation for service sector employees as it implies that the moral support given, experience gained from and affection expressed by the family/society could exert a bonding force to maintain a better quality at work in their organization. Factor 4 (PLEW) comprised of seven statements with reliability alpha of 0.97 and an overall factor mean of 1.55 (Table 3). This section emphasized the importance of positive vision and attitude at the work place, a good work culture and a better work environment. These initiatives could provide better inputs to the personal life of the employees.

Table 3. Factor analysis with varimax rotation and reliability test of work life balance among service sector employees (N = 375)

Item No. (as given in Table 2)	Factor loading	Factor name& factor mean	Eigen value	Variance %	Cumulative variance %	Cronbach alpha
1	0.95	Intrusion of personal life into work (IPLW) 5.41	18.19	41.34	41.34	0.97
2	0.93					
3	0.93					
4	0.93					
5	0.92					
6	0.91					
7	0.89					
8	0.88					
9	0.86					
10	0.79					
11	0.98	Intrusion of work into personal life (IWPL) 4.99	11.60	26.36	67.7	0.98
12	0.98					
13	0.97					
14	0.96					
15	0.87					
16	0.81					
17	0.74					
18	0.73					
19	0.73					
20	0.73					
21	0.68					
22	0.68					
23	0.68					
24	0.67					
25	0.66					
26	0.65					
27	0.65					
28	0.64					

Table contd...

Item No. (as given in Table 2)	Factor loading	Factor name& factor mean	Eigen value	Variance %	Cumulative variance %	Cronbach alpha
29	0.84	Work enhancement by personal life (WEPL) 1.76	7.852	17.85	85.54	0.81
30	0.81					
31	0.78					
32	0.64					
33	0.68					
34	0.66					
35	0.65					
36	0.86	Personal life enhancement by work (PLEW) 1.55	2.46	5.61	91.16	0.97
37	0.85					
38	0.85					
39	0.82					
40	0.79					
41	0.62					
42	0.61					

Note: Seven point scale was used for rating the indicators ranging from 1 = never, 4 = sometimes to 7 = always.

Statements “my work/profession has no role in the miseries I suffer in the personal life” (IWPL), “my supervisors and colleagues have a difficult time in accommodating my work schedule” (IPLW) and “my personal/ family life has helped to improve my interpersonal skills in the work place” (WEPL) were deleted as factor loadings were < 0.5. The statement “the experience I gained at work makes me a better parent/spouse” (PLEW) was deleted after internal reliability test get maximum Cronbach alpha for the factor PWE.

#### Correlation and regression analysis

Correlation analysis (Table 4) revealed significant negative correlations between IWPL and WLB as well as IPLW and WLB. On the contrary WEPL as well as PLEW were having significant positive correlations with WLB. Linear regression analysis (Table 5) was conducted using the total sum of the statement (WLB index) as the dependent variable and the four dimensions as dependent variables. The results indicated that IWPL ( $\beta = -0.149$ ) and IPLW ( $\beta = -0.100$ ) are significant negative predictors of WLB and thereby supporting  $H_1$  that IWPL and IPLW are negatively related to WLB. On the contrary, WEPL ( $\beta = 2.557$ ) and PLWE ( $\beta = 1.938$ ) are significant positive predictors of WLB. Therefore  $H_2$  received full support from the data as hypothesized indicating 50.8 percentage of variance (adjusted  $R^2 = 0.508$ ,  $F = 97.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Table 5).

Table 4. Correlation matrix of various dimensions (factors) with the over all work-life balance

	M $\pm$ SD	WLB	IWPL	IPLW	WEPL	PLEW
WLB	81.19 $\pm$ 47.33	1				
IWPL	8.91 $\pm$ 6.00	-.204**	1			
IPLW	41.01 $\pm$ 15.38	-0.334**	0.074	1		
WEPL	37.61 $\pm$ 18.20	0.656**	-.105*	-0.311**	1	
PLEW	36.93 $\pm$ 17.12	0.673**	-0.98*	-0.323**	0.996***	1

Note: IPLW = Intrusion of personal life into work; IWPL = intrusion of work into personal life; PLEW = personal life enhancement by work; WEPL = work enhancement by personal life; WLB = work life balance; \* Significant at 0.05 level; \*\* Significant at 0.01 level; \*\*\* Significant at 0.001 level

Various workers have developed different instruments to measure the WLB of employees in different contexts and Reiter (2007) has given a precise review on various available scales. Even though most of these scales are having sufficiently higher levels of alpha coefficients, there are some practical difficulties in adopting these scales in their original forms in measuring the WLB of service sector employees in India. The difficulties encountered range from the nature of sample population, their working situation, familial concepts, to the societal setup in which the scales developed. The situation becomes more complicated in view of the peculiarities of Indian society and familial life. Indian society still remains largely as a male dominated patriarchal one with close family bondages, where joint families and extended families are prevalent. Even though more and more women are taking up paid jobs outside the

family boundary, they are generally accorded household duties and the responsibility of looking after the family in addition to their paid work. Similarly, the trend of both husband and wife becoming earning members of the family are also becoming prevalent in the Indian society and thereby adding to the woes of work life balance. Irrespective of the various horizontal and vertical social developments, the Indian society basically remains the same by retaining and cultivating the age-old cultural and society etiquettes and strong family bandages, where altruism is rather considered as a duty within the family. Looking after the older members of the family along with the young ones, educating the children and catering to the needs of various members of the family; are rather considered as prime concerns and cardinal duties of the spouses/earning members in addition to their personal needs and paid work functions. Similarly the multifaceted developments and various advancements taking place in the industrial world, the new found concepts of work, work culture and work place (Khatri and Budhwar, 2000; OECD, 2004) in the context of the peculiar familial and societal responsibilities and personal needs of the service sector employees in India have resulted in the ever increasing phenomenon of work life issues and imbalances in their lives. Therefore it deemed fit to develop a concise instrument to measure the WLB of service sector employees in India. For developing the scale, the works of Fisher (2001), Greenhaus *et al.* (2003) and Hayman (2005) have been thoroughly consulted and many of the ideas are utilized.

Table 5. Regression analysis of work-life balance with its dimensions

	B	SEB	$\beta$	Significance
IWPL	-1.177	0.289	-0.149	0.000
IPLW	-0.307	0.119	-0.100	0.000
WEPL	2.08	0.346	2.557	0.000
PLEW	1.579	0.345	1.938	0.000

Note:  $R = 0.717$ ;  $R^2 = 0.514$ ;  $\bar{R}^2 = 0.508$ ;  $F = 97.67$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; IPLW = Intrusion of personal life into work; IWPL = intrusion of work into personal life; PLEW = personal life enhancement by work; SEB = standard error beta; WEPL = work enhancement by personal life; WLB = work life balance; B = unstandardised beta value;  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient.

In the present study the factor analysis procedure employed the principle components method for extraction with varimax option, which ultimately yielded four factors. All the retained four factors are having eigen values greater than one ( $>1$ ) and factor loadings more than 0.5. This is in accordance with the report of Hair *et al.* (2005) that factors having eigen values higher than 1.0 and factor loadings greater than 0.5 can be retained in the instrument. After the verification of the dimensionality, the reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach alpha coefficient and resulted in alpha scores more than the minimum threshold value of 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). The final Cronbach alpha for the four factors are in the order IPLW = 0.97, IWPL = 0.98, WEPL = 0.81 and PLEW = 0.97. The reliability estimates and factor loading schedule of the items finally resulted in a four factor instrument for measuring the WLB of service sector employees with a total of 42 items. In order to critically assess the interface between work and personal/family life in the Indian context, more statements have been included in IWPL and IPLW sections of the present questionnaire than the other available scales. Similarly, the scale developed in the present study has provisions to extensively measure the positive spillover (enhancement) in both the directions namely toward work and personal life.

Finally, the four factors, 42 items instrument developed in the present study is intended to measure the WLB status of service sector employees. The instrument possesses acceptable validity and reliability. The scale not only explores the WLB level of the employees but also could give insights about the employees' perceptions and concepts about WLB. These insights could be utilized by the organizations to develop WLB provisions and programmes. It may also be utilized as an effective tool to monitor the impact and effectiveness of WLB programmes implemented by the organizations, which in turn could help the policy makers and human resource managers to take corrective measures if necessary. This study adds to the existing literature on WLB and provides an opportunity to more critically analyse and understand the crossover between the work and life domains of employees.

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